

## fa la la la la (la la la la) by dustingspace

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**Summary:**

the wheelers' annual christmas eve party brings quite a few things; cookies, presents -- and a chance for lucas to get something off his chest

## **fa la la la la (la la la la)**

“Are there raisins in those?” Lucas asked, pointing to a suspicious-looking platter of oatmeal cookies. Dustin squinted his eyes and stared at the plate.

“I don’t know. I think you should try one.”

“Dustin, if I take a bite into that cookie and then realize there is a raisin in my mouth – I’m going to have to kill you.”

“Let me think about it.” Dustin paused, pressing a hand to his chin.  
“Okay. Fine. I’ll take one for the team.”

“Those are oatmeal raisin.” Mike said, shoving his hands into his pockets and leaning forward between the two of them. “My mom made them.”

“Mike, your mom always brings the healthy shit.” Lucas muttered, turning around to face him. “We’ve been here for thirty minutes. Isn’t Mrs. Byers supposed to be bringing over sugar cookies and chocolate chip?”

“I think so. Jonathan should be making them –“

“That means they’re going to be awesome.” Dustin grinned, turning around and grabbing a deviled egg from a platter, shoving it into his mouth. “Are El and –”

“Her dad coming? Yeah.” Mike said, waving a hand, “And Max, too. I think. Unless she bails –”

“She won’t bail. Why would she bail? Did she mention something about bailing?” Lucas asked, and Mike rolled his eyes up to the ceiling.

“If she was going to bail, don’t you think that you would know? Considering you’re Max’s –”

“Best friend.” Lucas said, pointing a finger at him. “Best friend.”

“You two are pathetic.” Dustin said, around a mouth full of egg, “Seriously pathetic.”

“At least I have the guts to say El is my –” Mike pauses, fumbles around the word, “Girl – friend.”

“Girl-friend? Not girlfriend? You’re just as bad, Mike.” Dustin groaned, turning toward the door as he heard it open; Steve entered, carting a few gift bags and a plastic container full of what looked like macaroni-and-cheese. “Oh, shit!”

“What, you didn’t know Steve was coming?” Mike asked, turning toward the door and lifting his hand in a wave. In two seconds he would be swarmed by Mrs. Wheeler and Nancy, both showering him with praise for the presents and the food and for even showing up.

Seriously, he didn’t know what was going on between Harrington and his sister. He didn’t really care enough to find out.

“I can’t believe Nancy invited him.” Dustin said, heading off in Steve’s direction. Mike turned toward Lucas, who was shuffling his feet and staring at the food distractedly.

“So – you and Max still haven’t – like –”

“No. We didn’t talk about it. I don’t even know if she wants to talk about it. It just kind of happened and it was weird and I liked it – I – I mean, obviously, I loved it because she’s so cool –”

“You should probably say something to her.” Mike said, reaching for a cracker, “El and I talked about it.”

“Don’t act so smooth, Mike. El told Max everything and then Max told me everything.” Lucas teased him, leaning against the table, “We both know that you cried –”

“You know what, Lucas?” Mike asked, straightening and turning to stare at him. “When Max goes missing for a year and you think she’s dead and then all of the sudden she shows back up – come back and talk to me.”

“I’m sorry.” Lucas said, frowning, “Sorry.”

“It’s fine.” Mike huffed, glancing over at the door as it opened again; this time it was El and Hopper.

El was wearing a red dress and sneakers, her hair pulled up out of her face with a green scrunchie. Mike shoved the rest of his cracker in his mouth and turned toward her, walking over to embrace her in a tight hug.

Lucas leaned against the table, turning to frown at the array of appetizers. His own parents were too busy at home to join him; they would be going on vacation for the rest of winter break the day after Christmas.

Today, Christmas Eve, was the last day he would have in the entire year to talk to Max about his feelings. And that was stressful.

Lucas usually dealt with stress well. But today he felt like a shaking mess.

The door opened again, and Lucas whipped around to face it; this time it was the Byers, Joyce looking like a frazzled mess with all of the containers of food that she and Jonathan were carrying. Will had a half dozen small packages with him, and Lucas headed over to help.

“Lucas, Mike, Dustin, Max, El – and Nancy.” Will said, reading off the names on the packages. “You guys can open them now – oh, wait. Should we wait for Max?” Will asked, glancing around.

“I don’t – know if she’s coming. It’s starting to get a little late.” Lucas said, glancing up toward the clock on the wall.

“She’s coming.” El said, touching Lucas’ shoulder. “I’m sure she is.”

“Thanks, El.” Lucas said, wrapping an arm around her shoulder in a hug. He leaned in toward her ear and asked, “Did you see her?”

“Two blocks away.” El replied, rubbing his back and grinning at him. She pulled away and looked down to see Holly tugging at her hand, chattering about presents in the living room under the tree. “Oh, okay! Okay, I’m coming –”

El was pulled away, and Lucas turned to Will.

“You okay?” Will asked, holding the presents tightly to his chest.  
“You look –”

“He’s just nervous because he has to tell Maxine how much he loves her today.” Dustin teased, and Steve rolled his eyes and pressed a hand on top of Dustin’s head.

“Don’t listen to him.” Steve told Lucas, pointing a finger at him,  
“Here’s what you have to do –”

“Steve, you give the worst advice.” Mike said, rolling his eyes and pushing Steve’s hand out of the air. “Nancy gives okay advice, though – I think she went into the kitchen –”

“Woah, woah, woah, woah, I will not be shown up by a Wheeler. Are you fuckin’ kidding me?”

“Language.” Hopper shouted from the kitchen, and Steve lowered his head and pressed his lips together in embarrassment.

The door opened.

Max walked inside.

“Holy shit, what happened to you?” Mike asked, and Max looked down. She was in a dress.

“Oh, bull-shit Mike, don’t act like you’re surprised that I have legs.” Max scoffed, pressing her hands against her hips and frowning down at her dress. She added on quickly – “My mom wanted me to wear it.”

“So she didn’t make you wear a dress to the Snow Ball – but she made you wear one to the Wheeler Christmas Party?” Dustin asked, and Max blushed and shook her head.

“Shut up. I don’t need to – to explain myself to you, Dustin, of all people –”

“Max, you look great.” Will said, offering her a smile before being called away by El to put the presents under the tree.

El stood up and walked back to the front door – she gasped when she saw Max, and grinned madly at her as she wrapped her into a hug.

“You look beautiful!” El insisted, and Max’s hair matched her face. Max hugged El back quickly before withdrawing, shrinking in on herself.

“Yeah. You do.” Lucas said, and Max whipped her head around to face him.

“Thanks, stalker.” She said, smiling and ducking away from him. “Where are the cookies at?”

“In the kitchen!” El called out, already heading in that direction.

Lucas frowned and started to walk after them, but Steve pressed a hand to his shoulder and turned him around. “Listen, Lucas. I know I usually spread the ‘don’t care, pretend like you don’t give a shit’ kind of attitude, but – it’s Christmas. Act like you care. Give her all you got.”

Lucas turned around to face Steve, who was speaking to him – though his eyes were fixated on what he knew was Nancy in the other room.

“You think that’ll win her over?”

“There’s mistletoe in the kitchen.” Steve said, brushing past Lucas. “That’s all I’m sayin’.”

Lucas headed into the living room where his friends had all gathered around the tree to look at the presents that Will had gotten for them. Will had put all the presents in a pile in the center of the circle, and was handing them out.

“Here’s Max – El – Mike – Dustin – Lucas?”

Lucas sat down and raised a hand, and Will slipped the small rectangle into his lap.

“Alright.” Will grinned, blushing slightly, “Open them on three?”

“One –” Max started, but El let out a squeal and ripped the wrapping off her own. The rest of the party followed, and they were each holding a framed postcard-sized drawing of the six of them.

All of the drawings were different; there was the five of them outside of the arcade, in Mike’s basement, in Will’s backyard, in Hopper’s cabin, eating ice cream – and at the Snow Ball. El pressed her own framed picture to her chest, and then leaned over to press a kiss to Will’s cheek.

“Thank you!” She grinned, moving the picture and leaning over to show Mike. Max stared down at her own picture; she was leaning over Dig Dug, and Lucas was peering over her shoulder, the rest of the party not nearly as close. She was blushing, and Will raised his eyebrows as she looked up at him.

“Will – it’s fantastic. Thank you so much.” Max said, reaching over to wind an arm around his neck and hug him tightly.

When Max pulled away, her eyes were shiny with tears. “Woah, Max, are you okay?” Dustin asked, and Max waved a hand and laughed at him. “You’re not gonna cry, are you?”

“Oh, shut up.” Max mumbled, flicking him off. “Me? Cry? Never.”

Lucas stared down at his own frame; he and Max were sharing an ice cream cone, Will was smashing one against Dustin’s face, and El was levitating her and Mike’s in front of them as she hugged him tightly.

“I think we look pretty damn cute.” Max whispered, leaning over to look at Lucas’ frame.

“We always do.” Lucas replied, glancing up at her. “Want to get a drink?”

“Eggnog?”

“If we can sneak it.”

“It’s in the fridge, on the fourth shelf.” Mike said, “Grab it and six cups and we’ll go down to the basement.”

“If we get caught?” Lucas asked, and Mike waved a hand.

“My mom won’t do anything. She’ll probably pretend she didn’t even see.” Mike said, standing. “Basement. Five minutes.”

“Gotcha.” Lucas said, pointing a finger at Mike. “C’mon, Max.”

“Yeah, yeah.” Max said, handing her picture to El for her to take downstairs. “I’m coming.”

Max slipped into the kitchen behind Lucas, who danced around Nancy and Jonathan to get to the fridge. Mr. Wheeler was drunkenly explaining something to Hopper, who was too focused on Joyce (who was chattering on about how absolutely fabulous Mrs. Wheeler’s hashbrown casserole was every year) to see them open the fridge.

Max slipped the bottle of eggnog out of the fridge and handed it to Lucas, who shoved it under his sweater. Max grabbed a stack of red solo cups (and a handful of cookies from a platter) as they headed toward the exit. Steve turned around and nearly bumped into the two kids before grinning at them and pointing to the top of the doorway – “Mistletoe!”

Lucas turned and Max leaned in toward him, pressing her lips against his for a fleeting second before ducking out of the kitchen. Lucas ran after her, and Max headed toward the basement door. “Max, wait!”

“What’s up, stalker?” She asked, turning around to face him, face flushed with excitement –

Lucas leaned in and kissed her, this time without mistletoe.

Max sighed when Lucas pulled away, and she leaned against the doorway for a minute to stare at him.

“I didn’t expect to ever like you this much.” She said, glancing away. “But I really do –”

“Be my girlfriend?” Lucas asked, tugging the eggnog out from under his sweater. “So we have something to ‘cheers’ for?”

Max turned to look at him. She broke into a grin and rolled her eyes

at him, reaching for the doorknob. “You know, Lucas – I think that’d be the best Christmas present I get this year.”

“Merry Christmas, Max.” Lucas said, following her down the steps into the basement. Lucas tossed the bottle of eggnog to Dustin, who held it up and cheered –

“And a Happy New Year!”

**Author's Note:**

merry christmas eve if you celebrate xxx much love  
to you all!!!